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ABSTRACT

In January 1983, each of Alabama's 128 school system superintendents was sent a questionnaire requesting an estimate of that system's employment needs, by certification area, for the 1983-84 school year. Questionnaires submitted to teacher education institutions in Alabama requested information on the number of students completing student teaching during the 1982-83 academic year. A response rate of 69 percent from the school systems and 92 percent of the education institutions was achieved. Resulting data are presented in the form of tables which list the number of: (1) projected vacancies for 80 school systems; (2) extrapolated vacancies for 128 school systems; (3) student teachers graduating from Alabama institutions; and (4) projected over- and under-supply for all areas of certification in elementary and secondary schools. Certification areas noted to be of greatest under-supply included elementary education, mathematics, learning disabled, gifted and talented, chemistry, and physics. (JD)

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ALABAMA TEACHER SUPPLY-DEMAND FOR 1983-1984

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This study was undertaken for several reasons. First, school systems in Alabama and across the nation have been reporting a shortage of employable teachers in some certification areas. One of our goals was to assess the teacher employment needs of Alabama school systems for the 1983-1984 school year. Second, teacher education programs in Alabama have experienced serious declines in enrollment during the past few years and state-wide data concerning the production of new teachers are needed for planning purposes by school systems, the State Board of Education, and teacher education institutions. Third, we wanted to compare teacher supply and teacher demand data for Alabama to identify certification areas of teacher oversupply and teacher undersupply. Fourth, we wanted to establish a service for Alabama school systems and Alabama trained teachers which would allow each to know where teaching vacancies and available employment opportunities exist.

Methodology

In January, 1983, each of Alabama's 128 school system superintendents was mailed a questionnaire which requested an estimate of that school system's employment needs, by certification area, for the 1983-1984 school year. In the same month, the director of student teaching at each Alabama teacher education college or university was mailed a questionnaire which requested the number of students completing student teaching during the 1982-1983 academic year.

By April 1, 1983, responses had been received from 80 school systems, representing a 63 per cent return of the questionnaires. Based on data supplied by the State Department of Education, calculation showed the responding 80 school systems represented 20,096 FTE teacher units employed in Alabama for the 1982-1983 school year. Thus,

the responding school systems represented approximately 69 per cent of Alabama's 1982-1983 teacher force. Using a simple proportion method, which yielded a multiplier of 1.46, the number of vacancies in each certification area for 1983-1984 reported by the 80 responding school systems was extrapolated to represent vacancies for the total of 128 Alabama school systems. The number of vacancies in each certification area reported by the 80 responding school systems and the extrapolated vacancies for 128 Alabama school systems, rounded to the nearest whole number, are shown in columns one and two, respectively, of the accompanying table.

By April 1, 1983, responses had been received from 23 of 25 teacher education institutions in Alabama, a response rate of 92 per cent. Because the two institutions which did not respond are relatively small schools and do not produce a significant number of certified teachers, no attempt was made to extrapolate the reported data to represent all of Alabama's teacher education institutions. The number of students completing student teaching at the 23 responding institutions during 1982-1983 is given for each certification area in column three of the accompanying table.

Column four of the table represents the projected oversupply or undersupply of teachers by certification area. The oversupply, represented by a plus sign, and the undersupply, represented by a minus sign, were calculated by comparing the extrapolated vacancies for 128 school systems (column two) with the number of student teachers in 1982-1983 from 23 of 25 Alabama teacher education institutions (column three).

ALABAMA TEACHER SUPPLY-DEMAND FOR 1983-1984

AREA OF CERTIFICATION	PROJECTED VACANCIES: 80 SCHOOL SYSTEMS	EXTRAPOLATED VACANCIES: 128 SCHOOL SYSTEMS	STUDENT TEACHERS FROM ALABAMA INSTITUTIONS FOR 1982-1983	PROJECTED OVERSUPPLY (+) OR UNDERSUPPLY (-): COL. 2 VS. COL. 3
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION	328	479	435	-44
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	89	130	348	+218
ART	0	0	27	+27
HEALTH EDUCATION	0	0	3	+3
INDUSTRIAL ARTS	5	7	17	+10
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC	1	1	37	+36
VOCAL/CHORAL MUSIC	0	0	28	+28
GENERAL MUSIC	9	13	47	+34
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	15	22	237	+215
SPEECH COMMUNICATION AND THEATRE	0	0	5	+5
SPECIAL EDUCATION: DEAF-BLIND	3	4	10	+6
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED	9	13	13	0
EMOTIONALLY CONFLICTED	16	23	29	+6
GIFTED AND TALENTED	17	25	0	-25
HEARING IMPAIRED	7	10	19	+9
LEARNING DISABLED	51	74	6	-68
MENTALLY RETARDED	30	44	78	+34
MULTIHANDICAPPED	8	12	13	+1
ORTHOPEDICALLY HANDICAPPED AND OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRED	4	6	0	-6
SPEECH PATHOLOGY	25	37	59	+22
VISUALLY IMPAIRED	4	6	0	-6

ALABAMA TEACHER SUPPLY-DEMAND FOR 1983-1984

(continued)

AREA OF CERTIFICATION	PROJECTED VACANCIES: 80 SCHOOL SYSTEMS	EXTRAPOLATED VACANCIES 128 SCHOOL SYSTEMS	STUDENT TEACHERS FROM ALABAMA INSTITUTIONS FOR 1982-1983	PROJECTED OVERSUPPLY (+) OR UNDERSUPPLY (-): COL. 2 VS. COL. 3
HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL: COMPREHENSIVE LANGUAGE ARTS	—	—	11	+80
ENGLISH	17	25	94	
JOURNALISM	0	0	1	+1
MATHEMATICS	84	123	45	-78
COMPREHENSIVE SCIENCE	—	—	18	+40
BIOLOGY	16	23	45	
CHEMISTRY	18	26	12	-14
EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE	3	4	0	-4
PHYSICS	11	16	2	-14
COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE	—	—	44	+92
HISTORY	3	4	52	
GEOGRAPHY	0	0	0	0
ECONOMICS	1	1	1	0
POLITICAL SCIENCE	0	0	9	+9
PSYCHOLOGY	3	4	12	+8
SOCIOLOGY	1	1	7	+6
FRENCH	5	7	4	-3
SPANISH	7	10	6	-4
LATIN	0	0	0	0
GERMAN	0	0	0	0

ALABAMA TEACHER SUPPLY-DEMAND FOR 1983-1984

(continued)

AREA OF CERTIFICATION	PROJECTED VACANCIES: 80 SCHOOL SYSTEMS	EXTRAPOLATED VACANCIES: 128 SCHOOL SYSTEMS	STUDENT TEACHERS FROM ALABAMA INSTITUTIONS FOR 1982-1983	PROJECTED OVERSUPPLY (+) OR UNDERSUPPLY (-): COL. 2 VS. COL. 3
HIGH SCHOOL/MIDDLE SCHOOL: AGRIBUSINESS	3	4	16	+12
BUSINESS AND OFFICE EDUCATION	4	6	41	+35
DISTRIBUTIVE EDUCATION	1	1	6	+5
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS EDUCATION	0	0	0	0
HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION	5	7	34	+27
TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION	1	1	1	0
DRIVER AND TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION	3	4	1	-3

Assumptions and Limitations

The projection of teacher vacancies in a school system five to eight months prior to the start of a school year is, at best, a risky business. The vacancies projected by the 80 responding school systems (column one) should not be considered to be highly accurate. The extrapolation of vacancies from the 80 responding school systems to represent vacancies in all 128 Alabama school systems was done in a simple mathematical manner. It is unlikely that this procedure accurately reflects the employment needs in each of the certification areas for all of Alabama's school systems. In addition, the data reported do not consider in any way the employment needs of the private or parochial schools in Alabama. Given these cautions, the data reported in column two of the table are indicative of the teaching vacancies which may occur for the 1983-1984 school year, but the data should not be viewed as being exact. As previously stated, the numbers of students completing student teaching in Alabama teacher education institutions in 1982-1983 (column three) include data from 23 of 25 institutions. These data give a fairly accurate picture of the production of new teachers. However, the data assume that persons who student taught during 1982-1983 will go on to graduate, will successfully pass the Alabama Initial Teacher Certification Test, will be fully certified to teach, and will seek employment in Alabama school systems by August, 1983. A number of these persons will decide to attend graduate school, seek employment other than in teaching, or accept teaching employment in private/parochial or out of state school systems. Given these considerations, it might appear that the data in column three are inflated as they reflect the number of persons who

will actually be active in the teacher employment market for the 1983-1984 school year. However, any inflation of the data may be counteracted by persons who did not obtain teaching jobs in 1982-1983 and who will still be seeking jobs for the 1983-1984 school year.

Discussion

Column four appears to show an undersupply of Elementary teachers (-44) and an oversupply of Early Childhood teachers (+218). However, these two certification areas overlap at the first, second, and third grades. It is possible that superintendents responding to the questionnaire marked any anticipated teaching vacancies in grades one through six as Elementary certification vacancies and marked only anticipated kindergarten vacancies as Early Childhood certification vacancies. In addition, the indicated oversupply of persons certified in Early Childhood Education could be affected by State Superintendent Teague's request for full funding of the kindergarten program for all of Alabama's school systems. In testimony before an interim legislative budget committee on April 6, Dr. Teague asked for funding to support 1,999 kindergarten teachers for the 1983-1984 school year. This request is 919 kindergarten teacher units above the 1080 units employed during the 1982-1983 school year. Any positive response by the legislature toward more fully funding kindergarten programs will decrease the indicated oversupply of Early Childhood Education teachers.

Column four of the table shows the areas of greatest oversupply of new teachers, other than Early Childhood Education, to be in the certification areas of Physical Education, Comprehensive Language Arts/English, Comprehensive Science/Biology, and Comprehensive Social Science/History. It should be noted that the three comprehensive

certification areas of Language Arts, Science, and Social Science are relatively new and these areas were not included in the questionnaire sent to superintendents. Persons certified in Comprehensive Language Arts would most likely be employable as Middle School/High School English teachers. Therefore, the Comprehensive Language Arts and English certification areas were combined in column three and compared with the extrapolated English vacancies in column two. Similar procedures were used in combining Comprehensive Science with Biology and in combining Comprehensive Social Science with History.

It should be noted that data for student teachers who were enrolled in High School and Middle School certification programs were combined in preparing that portion of column three. High School certification is for grades 7 through 12, while Middle School certification is for grades 4 through 8. Since most Middle School certified teachers will probably take jobs in the upper middle school grades (7 and 8) or in traditional junior high schools and since these grades overlap the High School certification, the decision was made to combine these data. Additionally, the data reported by the teacher education institutions revealed very few persons student teaching in Middle School certification programs.

The certification areas of greatest undersupply other than Elementary Education, as shown in column four, are Mathematics, Learning Disabled, Gifted and Talented, Chemistry, and Physics. These areas of undersupply conform to similar data reported in the educational literature for the southeastern states and for the United States.

The teacher supply data reported in the table represent the certification of teachers at the undergraduate (Class B) level and do not consider persons who may be entering certification areas through

retraining at the Class A or Class AA certification levels. For example, the undersupply of Special Education Gifted and Talented teachers (-25) does not consider persons who may enter the job market through certification at the Class A level. In fact, the undersupply figure may not be as bad as that reported in the table because there is only one Gifted and Talented undergraduate program in Alabama while there are five Class A programs. This same situation holds true for the reported undersupply of Special Education Learning Disabled teachers.

The data reported here did not consider teacher supply-demand for certification areas above the Class B level. However, as a matter of interest, the 80 responding superintendents reported vacancies for 6 principals, 4 librarians, 2 guidance counselors, 1 teacher for home bound students, and 1 director of finance.

In our first paragraph, four reasons for conducting this study were mentioned. The data presented and the discussion to this point have addressed the first three reasons. Our fourth reason for this research can be illustrated by the following facts. During the 1981-1982 school year, 24 school systems sent recruiters to the Career Planning and Placement Office of The University of Alabama to interview graduating teacher education students. Seventeen of these school systems were located in states other than Alabama or overseas-based, American private schools. At this point in the 1982-1983 academic year, 13 of the 17 teacher recruiters visiting The University of Alabama have been from out of state or overseas school systems. Our fourth reason for the current research is to establish a data base which will assist Alabama school systems in locating employable teachers and which will assist Alabama trained teachers in

identifying teaching vacancies.

If an Alabama school system needs to hire a teacher in a particular certification field, the superintendent or personnel officer can contact the Career Planning and Placement Office at The University of Alabama, telephone 348-5848. A search of the data base will identify teacher education institutions with student teachers in the sought for certification area. The school system official will then be directed to the job placement officers of the identified teacher education institutions. For teacher education students seeking job vacancies, the reverse of this procedure can apply, job placement officers at teacher education institutions can, through the data base, identify school systems with possible vacancies.

Based on this study, the teacher supply-demand picture for Alabama school systems and for teacher education students does not, with the exception of a few key areas, appear to be too much out of balance. Continuing low enrollments in the teacher education programs in Alabama and in the nation may seriously change this picture in a few years. At this point, our experience indicates that certified teachers can find employment in education if they are mobile enough to go where the jobs exist. We believe that in the coming years, Alabama school systems will have to become more aggressive in recruiting teachers and that new teachers coming out of teacher education institutions will be the prime source for filling vacancies. It is our hope that the establishment of our teacher supply-demand data base will assist in these recruiting efforts.

The current economic situation may have as much impact as any single factor in determining the demand for teachers. Of the 80 superintendents who returned our questionnaire, a significant number mentioned

that vacancies which would occur would not be filled due to the school system reducing the number of teacher units to conform to those allotted by the state funded Minimum Program. A number of superintendents also mentioned that any vacancies could be filled from job applications already on hand. This brings to mind a recent situation in which a school system needed to employ a teacher during the middle of the school year. Attempts to reach persons who had filed job applications with the system were begun. On the thirty-fifth telephone call, a teacher was finally located who was not already employed elswhere and who was interested in interviewing for the job. In looking at employment needs for 1983-1984, we would urge school systems to regularly review applications on hand to determine their validity.